

A BOOK OF ENGLISH POEMS

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GRADED FOR USE IN SCHOOLS

By J. H. JAGGER, M.A., D.Litt.

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PART ONE



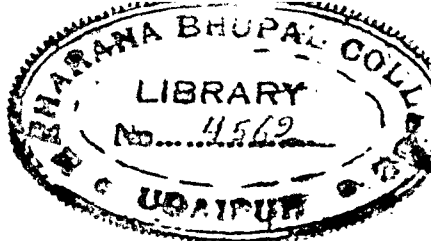
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INTRODUCTION

WHATEVER one learns about poetry, it should never be forgotten that, first of all, every poem is meant to please the reader. If that is forgotten, all is spoilt. A good poem makes the reader feel a solemn delight and a serene excitement.

A poet is a man or woman who can see what is hidden from others, feels it intensely, and can tell it to everybody who will listen. It is easy for anyone to describe a cowslip, its green leaves and its yellow petals with their red markings. But it is not everyone who has the eye to see these things, and the heart to feel their loveliness, in such a way as to be able to write :

She spread her little mat of green,
And on it danced she ;
With a fillet bound about her brow,
A fillet round her happy brow,
A golden fillet round her brow,
And rubies in her hair.

Poets know how to make words sound tuneful, and how to tell a tale, and how to paint pictures with their words, just as a painter does with a brush and colours. They are very clever in the use of words. In addition, they love the beauty of the world around them, and they love other men and women, and because of this they easily learn how to make poems, and to give pleasure to their readers.

Some poems are songs ; others, such as *Bubble Blowing*, are about incidents that may happen to anyone ; others, like *The Pipers*, tell of mere fancies, or, like *The Pied Piper* and *The Sea Princess*, of imaginary beings. Sometimes, as in *Sir Patrick Spens*, which is about a shipwreck, the poet relates a story. Indeed, there is no subject which may not be the opportunity for a poem, so that there are even religious poems, and comic poems, and poems which teach a lesson. One great class of poems describes the beauties of nature, the earth spread with flowers and grass for a carpet, the rolling sea, and the sky, by day filled with light, by night hung with glittering jewels. Poems of all these kinds are to be found in this book.



A BOOK OF ENGLISH POEMS

I

DAWN SONG

SISTER, awake ! close not your eyes ;
The Day her light discloses,
And the bright morning doth arise
Out of her bed of roses.

See, the clear Sun, the world's bright eye,
In at our window peeping :
Lo ! how he blusheth to espy
Us idle wenches sleeping.

Therefore, awake ! make haste, I say.
And let us, without staying,
All in our gowns of green so gay
Into the park a-maying.

Anonymous.

WAKEN, LORDS AND LADIES GAY

Everyone can understand the joy of walking in the early morning, when the dew is still glistening on the leaves, and the air has not yet been warmed by the sun.

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay !
On the mountain dawns the day,
All the jolly chase is here,
With hawk, and horse, and hunting-spear !

Hounds are in their couples yelling,
 Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
 Merrily, merrily, mingle they :
 Waken, lords and ladies gay !

Waken, lords and ladies gay !
 The mist has left the mountains gray,
 Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
 Diamonds on the brake are gleaming :
 And foresters have busy been
 To track the buck in thicket green :
 Now we come to chant our lay :
 " Waken, lords and ladies gay ! "

Louder, louder, chant the lay ;
 Waken lords and ladies gay.
 Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee,
 Run a course as well as we :
 Time, stern huntsman, who can baulk,
 Stanch as hound, and fleet as hawk ?
 Think of this, and rise with day,
 Gentle lords and ladies gay.
Sir Walter Scott.

FAIRY SONGS

These songs are sung by fairies. The third is a serenade,
 sung in chorus, to charm the Fairy Queen to sleep.

I

OVER hill, over dale,
 Thorough bush, thorough brier,
 Over park, over pale,
 Thorough flood, thorough fire,
 I do wander everywhere,
 Swifter than the moon's sphere ;

And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be ;
In their gold coats spots you see ;
Those be rubies, fairy favours ;
In those freckles live their savours.

II

Where the bee sucks, there suck I :
In a cowslip's bell I lie ;
There I couch when owls do fly.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

III

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen ;
Newts and blindworms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.
Weaving spiders, come not here ;
Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence !
Beetles black, approach not near ;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.
Philomel,* with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby ;
Never harm,
Nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh ;
So goodnight, with lullaby.

William Shakespeare.

* Philomel is the nightingale.

A CANADIAN BOAT SONG

Written on the River St. Lawrence, while the poet was listening to the boatmen singing as they rowed. The Utawas River flows into the St. Lawrence near the Rapid of St. Ann.

I

FAINTLY as tolls the evening chime,
Our voices keep tune and our oars keep time.
Soon as the woods on shore look dim,
We'll sing at St. Ann's our parting hymn.
Row, brothers, row, the stream runs fast,
The Rapids are near, and the daylight's past.

II

Why should we yet our sail unfurl ?
There is not a breath the blue wave to curl.
But when the wind blows off the shore,
Oh, sweetly we'll rest our weary oar.
Blow, breezes, blow, the stream runs fast,
The Rapids are near, and the daylight's past.

III

Utawas' tide ! this trembling moon
Shall see us float over thy surges soon.
Saint of this green Isle ! hear our prayers,
Oh, grant us cool heavens and favouring airs.
Blow, breezes, blow, the stream runs fast,
The Rapids are near, and the daylight's past.

Thomas Moore.

I WILL MAKE YOU BROOCHES

Perhaps it is a bad thing to enquire too closely what a poem means when the tune in it sounds so delightful. If a choice had to be made between wealth and life under the open sky, it is certain that many of us would choose the latter.

I WILL make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your
room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the
broom.

And you shall wash your linen and keep your
body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is
near,

The fine song for morning, the rare song to hear,
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside
fire.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

A WET SHEET AND A FLOWING SEA

The previous poem praises the life of a carefree wanderer on land; this glorifies the lot of the sailor.

A WET sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast,
And fills the white and rustling sail,
And bends the gallant mast;

And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
While, like the eagle free,
Away the good ship flies, and leaves
Old England on the lee.

O for a soft and gentle wind !
I hear a fair one cry ;
But give to me the snoring breeze
And white waves heaving high ;
And white waves heaving high, my boys,
The good ship tight and free—
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we.

There's tempest in yon hornéd moon
And lightning in yon cloud ;
And hark the music, mariners !
The wind is piping loud ;
The wind is piping loud, my boys,
The lightning flashing free—
While the hollow oak our palace is,
Our heritage the sea.

Allan Cunningham.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

Every good man loves his own country. This song is the heart's cry of the exiled Scot.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here ;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer ;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the north,
The birthplace of valour, the country of worth ;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high, covered with
snow ;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below ;
Farewell to the forests and wild hanging woods ;
Farewell to the torrents and loud pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here ;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer ;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe.
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

Robert Burns.

THE SKYLARK

BIRD of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea !
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place ;
O, to abide in the desert with thee.

Wild is thy lay and loud ;
Far in the downy cloud
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying ?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing, away !

Then, when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be !
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling place ;
O, to abide in the desert with thee.

James Hogg.

A BOY'S SONG

Spring, summer, and autumn are all in this ; and country
rambles, and a happy tune.

WHERE the pools are bright and deep,
Where the grey trout lies asleep,
Up the river and o'er the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the blackbird sings the latest,
Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,
Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the mowers mow the cleanest,
Where the hay lies thick and greenest,
There to track the homeward bee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

A Boy's Song

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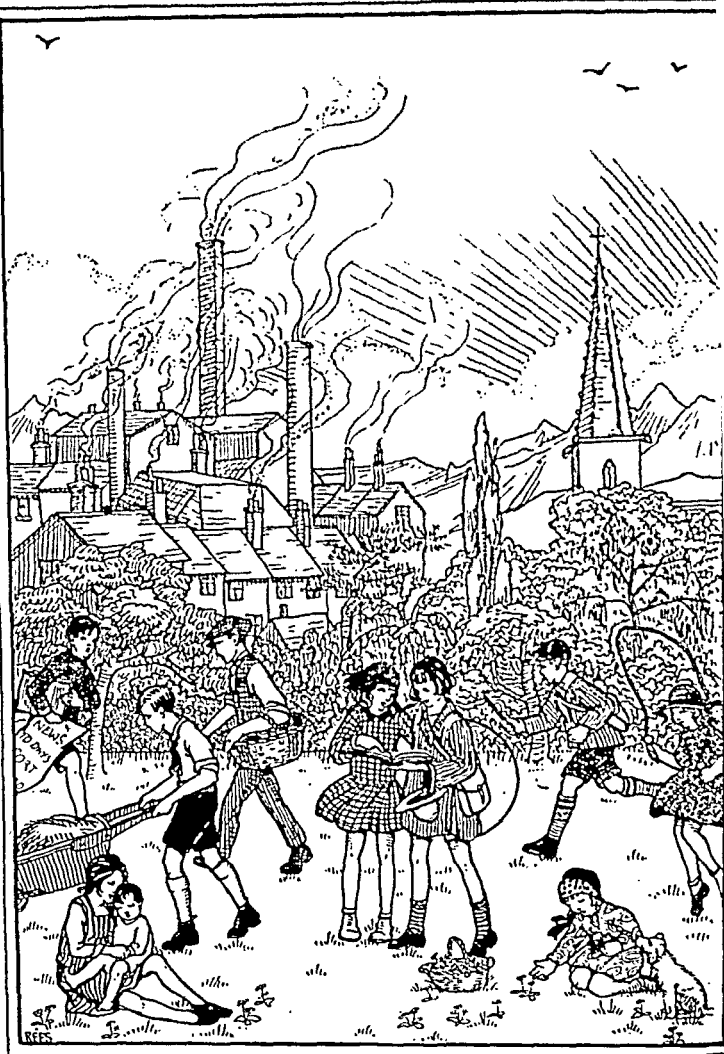
Where the hazel bank is steepest,
Where the shadow falls the deepest,
Where the clustering nuts fall free,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Why the boys should drive away
Little sweet maidens from the play,
Or love to banter and fight so well,
That's the thing I never could tell.

But this I know, I love to play
Through the meadow among the hay,
Up the water and o'er the lea ;
That's the way for Billy and me.

James Hogg.





II

BUBBLE BLOWING

In this dainty and tender little poem, besides the charming incident it presents, you should notice the tripping music of the rhymes, and the picture of the soaring bubble. Words can make us imagine shapes and colours, and this is what the poet does in the fourth and fifth verses.

OUR plot is small, but sunny limes
Shut out all cares and troubles ;
And there my little girl at times
And I sit blowing bubbles.

The screaming swifts race to and fro,
Bees cross the ivied paling,
Draughts lift and set the globes we blow
In freakish currents sailing.

They glide, they dart, they soar, they break.
Oh, joyous little daughter,
What lovely coloured worlds we make,
What crystal flowers of water !

One, green and rosy, slowly drops ;
One soars and shines a minute,
And carries to the lime-tree tops
Our home, reflected in it.

The gable, with cream rose in bloom,
She sees from roof to basement :
" Oh, father, there's your little room ! "
She cries in glad amazement.

To her enchanted with the gleam,
The glamour and the glory,
The bubble home's a home of dream,
And I must tell its story ;

Tell what we did, and how we played,
Withdrawn from care and trouble—
A father and his merry maid,
Whose house was in a bubble !

William Canton.

THE PEDLAR'S CARAVAN

I wish I lived in a caravan,
With a horse to drive, like the pedlar-man !
Where he comes from nobody knows,
Or where he goes to, but on he goes.

His caravan has windows two,
And a chimney of tin, that the smoke comes
through ;
He has a wife, with a baby brown,
And they go riding from town to town.

Chairs to mend, and delf to sell !
He clashes the basins like a bell ;
Tea-trays, baskets ranged in order,
Plates, with alphabets round the border.

The roads are brown, and the sea is green,
But his house is like a bathing-machine ;
The world is round, and he can ride,
Rumble and splash, to the other side.

With the pedlar-man I should like to roam,
And write a book when I came home :
All the people would read my book,
Just like the Travels of Captain Cook.

W. B. Rands.

ESCAPE AT BED TIME

THE lights from the parlour and kitchen shone out
Through the blinds and the windows and bars ;
And high over head and all moving about
There were thousands of millions of stars.
There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree,
Nor of people in church or the park,
As the crowds of the stars that looked down
upon me,
And that glittered and winked in the dark.

The Dog, and the Plough, and the Hunter, and all,
And the star of the sailor, and Mars,
These shone in the sky, and the pail by the wall
Would be half full of water and stars.
They saw me at last, and they chased me with
cries,
And they soon had me packed into bed ;
But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes,
And the stars going round in my head.

R. L. Stevenson.

FROM A RAILWAY CARRIAGE

FASTER than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches ;
And, charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle :
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain ;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.
Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles ;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes ;
And here is the green for stringing the daisies !
Here is a cart run away in the road
Lumping along with man and load ;
And here is a mill and there is a river :
Each a glimpse and gone for ever !

R. L. Stevenson.



III

LOCHINVAR

O, YOUNG Lochinvar is come out of the west.
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best,
And save his good broad-sword he weapons had
none ;

He rode all unarmed and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake and he stopped not for
stone,

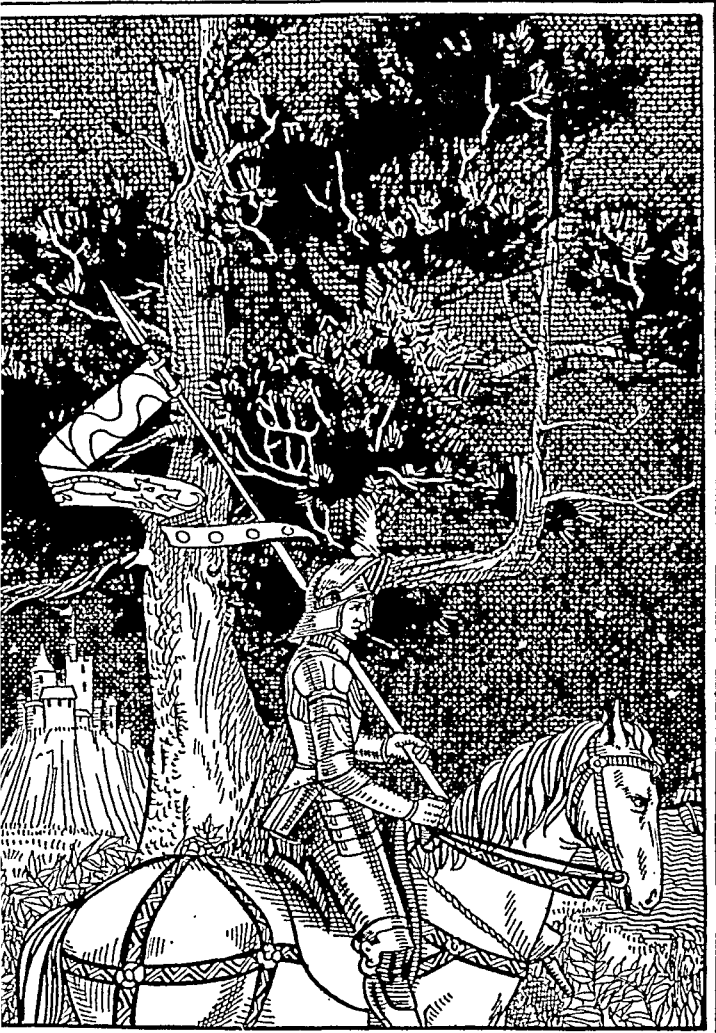
He swam the Esk river where ford there was none ;
But, ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late :
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby hall
Among bride's-men and kinsmen, and brothers,
and all :

Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his
sword

(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a
word),

"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"



"I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied :

Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now I am come, with this lost love of mine
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young
Lochinvar."

The bride kissed the goblet : the knight took
it up ;

He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down
the cup ;

She looked down to blush, and she looked up to
sigh,

With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.

He took her soft hand ere her mother could bar,—

"Now tread we a measure !" said young
Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,

'That never a hall such a galliard did grace ;

While her mother did fret, and her father did
fume,

And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet
and plume ;

And the bride-maidens whispered, "'Twere
better by far

To have matched our fair cousin with young
Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger
stood near ;

So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
 So light to the saddle before her he sprang !
 " She is won ! we are gone, over bank, bush, and
 scaur !
 They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth
 young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the
 Netherby clan ;
 Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and
 they ran ;
 There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
 But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
 So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
 Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young
 Lochinvar ?

Sir Walter Scott.

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX

What an energetic poem is this ! The reader almost breathes hard like the rider who tells the tale, almost sees the stars, and the misty dawn, and the early sun, almost feels that he is galloping through the stubble-fields, and that he is urging his horse on in his effort to be in time, pride and anxiety contending for mastery in his mind.

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he ;
 I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three ;
 " Good speed," cried the watch, as the gatebolts
 undrew ;
 " Speed," echoed the wall to us galloping through ;
 Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
 And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

How They Brought the Good News 19

Not a word to each other ; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our
place ;

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique
right,

Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting ; but, while we drew
near

Lokeren, the cocks crew, and twilight dawned
clear ;

At Boom a great yellow star came out to see ;

At Duffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be ;

And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the
half chime,

So Joris broke silence with : " Yet there is time."

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper, Roland, at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray ;

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear
bent back

For my voice, and the other pricked out on his
track ;

And one eye's black intelligence—ever that
glance

O'er its white edge at me, his own master,
askance !

And the thick, heavy spume-flakes which aye and
anon

His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned ; and cried Joris, " Stay
spur !

Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her ;
We'll remember at Aix "—for one heard the
quick wheeze

Of her chest, saw the stretched neck, and staggering
knees,

And sunk tail, the horrible heave of her flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky ;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble
like chaff ;

Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And " Gallop," cried Joris, " for Aix is in sight ! "

" How they'll greet us ! "—and all in a moment
his roan

Rolled neck and crop over, lay dead as a stone ;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole
weight

Of the news which alone could save Aix from her
fate,

With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buff-coat, each holster let
fall,

Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,

that are so often left in Wicklow as the only remnants of a farmhouse."⁴

When the summer was over the Synges moved back to Rathgar. The fall term opened at Trinity, but Synge had decided to forego lectures until the next term as he had done in his first year. His mother's apprehensions about his loss of religious faith were so great that she finally asked her minister to talk to him. The discussion which took place was not only futile but seems to have confirmed Synge's growing conviction that an open declaration of his unbelief was necessary so that the family would no longer indulge in the polite excuses they were beginning to fabricate to explain his absence from church. He announced that he would no longer attend church, that not only was it a form of polite hypocrisy but led people to conclusions about him that he could not allow. His mother must have seen this development coming, for the restraint with which she wrote about it in her diary expresses the quiet tragedy in her heart. For Christmas day she wrote, "Johnnie would not come, very sad . . . my only trouble Johnnie." Other members of the family spoke of it with discretion, but from this time on he was looked upon as an outsider. Only his indifference and his unwillingness to argue preserved the uneasy peace. The air of tension which his action had created tended to drive him in upon himself.

In November he began attending lectures in musical theory at the Royal Irish Academy of Music given by Sir Robert Stewart. For the next three years his formal musical training was at the academy. His subjects were violin, musical theory and composition. His mother wrote to Robert:

Johnnie is so bewitched with music that I fear he will not give it up. I never knew till lately that he was thinking of making his living by it seriously; he spares no pains or trouble and practises from morning till night, if he can. Harry* had a talk with him the other day, advising him very strongly not to think of making it a profession. Harry told him all the men who do take to drink! And they are not a nice set of men either, but I don't think his advice has had the least effect on Johnnie. . . . The sound of the fiddle makes me quite sad now. I used to think it was only a harmless amusement and it kept him out of mischief, but it seems now likely to lead to mischief.

* Harry Stephens, Synge's brother-in-law.

Then up and spake an eldern knight,
Sat at the king's right knee :
" Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailór
That ever sailed the sea."

Our king has written a braid lettér
And sealed it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the strand.

" To Norroway, to Norroway,
To Norroway o'er the faem ;
The kingis¹ daughter of Norroway,
'Tis thou maun bring her hame."

The first word that Sir Patrick read
So loud, loud laughèd he ;
The neist word that Sir Patrick read
The tear blinded his ee.

" O wha is this has done this deed
And tauld the king o' me,
To send us out, this time o' year,
To sail upon the sea ?

" Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet,
Our ship must sail the faem ;
The kingis daughter of Norroway,
'Tis we maun bring her hame."

They hadna sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift² grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly grew the sea.

¹ King's.

² Sky.

on the proportions of a cult in which the chief doctrine was liberation—not only from England but from the puritanical restrictions of Catholic life in Ireland. The picture of Stephen Dedalus' father sobbing for his "dead king" over an untasted Christmas dinner has lost little of its meaning to Irish readers even today.

If Catholic Ireland was demoralized to a state of shock over the downfall of Parnell, Protestant Ireland was delighted with it. Parnell was a Wicklow landlord, sprung from one of the families most prominent in the evangelical revival of the Protestant church, who epitomized in his personality all the autocratic detachment one would expect of his class. But he had devoted his genius to the emancipation of his country from English rule and from the grip of the landlords. Like Maud Gonne he had warred against his own class. How much more vivid a figure of revolt he must have seemed to Synge, a member of his class, than he had to the youthful James Joyce!

Synge passed his examinations for Hilary term in April and was free of all college obligations until the following October. The Stephenses had decided to move to a suburb known then as Kingstown and now by its ancient Gaelic name Dún Laoghaire. Mrs. Synge decided that she would move with them. A door was built in the wall connecting their attached houses, and for the next sixteen years the two families lived as one.

Dún Laoghaire is seven miles south of Dublin and connected with it by a railroad built in 1836. It has a deep-water harbour, from which the Holyhead boat sails daily, and is fringed by a wide promenade and seaside houses looking out over Dublin Bay. An article in *The Irish Times* of 1890 described it as a "fashionable metropolitan suburb" whose residents were "of the better class." Crosthwaite Park, however, is not on the waterfront. The house Synge lived in, Number 31, was smoothly plastered and painted grey. The dining room and drawing room, as in the other houses flanking it, had bow windows. All the doors were shining with brown varnish, finished with artificial graining, and the windows, porticoes and doorways were decorated with stucco ornamentation. The park in front was surrounded by a line of trees, and outside them was a spiked iron railing. Today Crosthwaite Park looks much the same, except that one no longer would describe it in the elegant terms used by *The Irish Times* in 1890.

But, putting to the main,
At Kaux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train,
Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort
Furnished in warlike sort
Marcheth tow'ards Agincourt
In happy hour ;
Skirmishing day by day
With those that stopped his way,
Where the French general lay
With all his power.

Which, in his height of pride,
King Henry to deride,
His ransom to provide,
To the King sending ;
Which he neglects the while,
As from a nation vile,
Yet with an angry smile,
Their fall portending.

And turning to his men
Quoth our brave Henry then,
" Though they to one be ten,
Be not amazèd :
Yet have we well begun ;
Battles so bravely won
Have ever to the sun
By fame been raisèd.

" And for myself (quoth he)
This my full rest shall be :

Dublin had not been touched by the current of nationalism. The concert had been arranged under the patronage of the lord lieutenant of Ireland and drew its support and its attendance from a fashionable audience. The conductors were three well known local composers, including Sir Robert Stewart.

The concert was a great success and was well reported in all the newspapers, but Mrs. Synge derived little pleasure from it. She wrote to Robert: "I wonder when his eyes will be opened to see his folly in wasting all his time at that music. . . . He has not one friend who thinks he is wise in going on in his present course, but he is very determined and takes no advice from anyone. Poor boy, how I long to see his footsteps turned into the way of peace, and I pray continually for him." Had she known it, she might have drawn some consolation from the fact that he was exceedingly nervous about playing in public. Only in an orchestra, where his efforts were blended with those of other players, could he face an audience. Ultimately his shyness turned him away from music altogether. One of the most revealing things he wrote during his early years in Paris when he was desperately trying to achieve some kind of self-expression is a disturbing narrative about a violinist who collapses in the middle of his first important recital because he is nervous and unsure of himself. Though he later described it as "a morbid thing about a mad fiddler in Paris which I hate," he could not bring himself to destroy it. It was a chapter in the story of his private life and he could not have denied it.

After the concert he began preparing for the Junior Sophister examinations in April, and his notebooks show how assiduously he could study when he had to. He passed by a narrow margin and went back to his music again, knowing that the college would not ask anything of him again until the autumn. Playing in the orchestra now took all his interest and time. Years later he wrote in one of his notes:

Soon after my entrance to an orchestra we played the Jupiter Symphony of Mozart. It was in an academy and a Jewess was playing at the desk before me. No other emotion that I have received was quite so puissant or complete. A slight and altogether subconscious avidity of sex wound and wreathed itself in the extraordinary beauty of the movement, not

Well it thine age became,
O noble Erpingham,
Which didst the signal aim,
 To our hid forces.
When, from a meadow by,
Like a storm suddenly
The English archery
 Stuck the French horses.

With Spanish yew so strong,
Arrows a cloth-yard long,
That like to serpents stung,
 Piercing the weather ;
None from his fellow starts,
But playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts,
 Stuck close together.

When down their bows they threw,
And forth their bilboes drew,
And on the French they flew,
 Not one was tardy ;
Arms were from shoulders sent,
Scalps to the teeth were rent,
Down the French peasants went,—
 Our men were hardy !

This while our noble King,
His broadsword brandishing,
Down the French host did ding,
 As to o'erwhelm it ;

prize examinations to be given in the next term. The teaching of Irish at Trinity was prompted by a motive considerably different from that which was shortly to inspire the study of Irish elsewhere in Ireland. Being an activity of the Divinity School, it was the medium through which the Irish Church Missions hoped to convert the Roman Catholics of the west of Ireland to the Protestant faith. The professor of Irish was a country rector who spent half the academic year at the university and the other half in his parish in Skibbereen, County Cork. The only text Synge read in class was the Gospel of Saint John, and he actually acquired his copy of it from the Irish Society, which distributed free copies of the Scriptures in Irish in order "to instruct the native Irish, who still use their vernacular language, with a view to spread among them Scriptural instruction." Motivated by such an objective the course cannot have attracted many students. There must have been some competition, however, for Synge took first place on the prize examination and received £4, a more lucrative prize than he got for taking first also in Hebrew, a much less useful tool for converting the Catholic peasant.

Remembering his college course ten years later, he wrote, "In those days if an odd undergraduate of Trinity . . . wished to learn a little of the Irish language and went to the professor appointed to teach it in Trinity College, he found an amiable old clergyman who made him read a crabbed version of the New Testament, and seemed to know nothing, or least care nothing, about the old literature of Ireland, or the fine folk-tales and folk-poetry of Munster and Connaught."⁵

Synge's judgement of the Reverend James Goodman, who held the post of Professor of Irish at Trinity from 1884 until his death in 1896, would appear to be a little too harsh. Professor Goodman's interest in the native speaker may well have been directed more to saving his soul than to studying his literature, but he can hardly have cared nothing about the native tradition. For one thing he had been surrounded by it on the Dingle peninsula in Kerry, the heart of the *Gaeltacht*, where he was born and brought up as the son of the Protestant rector. He was also a member of the governing body of the Ossianic Society, a collector of Irish manuscripts, and is remembered today by students of Irish folk music for having collected and recorded almost two thousand traditional Irish melodies, some of



Wordsworth, his favorite poet. In his notes Synge commented, "Petrie laughs at O'Donovan's 'shillelagh style.'"

Petrie had been to the Aran Islands, and the notes he compiled there, quoted in Stokes' biography, may have been one of the things which interested Synge in Aran. Petrie wrote of the islanders, "They are a brave, hardy race, industrious and enterprising, as is sufficiently evinced not only by the daily increasing number of their fishing vessels [but by] the barren rock which they are covering with soil and making productive."⁷ Synge also found in Stokes' *Life* the story told by Petrie of an old woman whom he met in Aran. Like Maurya in *Riders to the Sea*, her life had been overshadowed by the drowning of her son. She said to Petrie: "It was not the will of God to leave him with me long. It was too much happiness for this world. My boy, sir, while fishing, was drowned in a storm off the cliffs of Moher, and I had not even the consolation of embracing his corpse."⁸

In the spring of 1892 the foundations of the Irish Literary Revival were being laid. The year before, Yeats, whom Sean O'Casey has dubbed "The Great Founder," founded the Irish Literary Society in London. In 1892 he came to Dublin and after some conversations with other enthusiasts decided to establish a society like the London one. In a letter to the press he called for a public meeting and announced the objectives of the proposed society—to publish books and give lectures and discussions "upon notable figures in Irish history and notable epochs in the national life, and on problems and difficulties of today." When the meeting was held on June 9th Synge was busy with his Hebrew and Irish. Yeats' call to arms had not reached him, if he was even aware of it. It did not move many other Irishmen either, for most Dubliners of 1892 were so concerned with purely political problems that they showed no awareness of the little group of gifted translators and poets who were intent upon giving artistic expression to nationalist aspirations. Two days after the meeting, when he might have read the newspaper accounts of it, Synge noted in his diary that he had studied Hebrew for fifteen hours.

The measure of his isolation may be taken from the fact that when the inaugural meeting of the Irish National Literary Society was held in Dublin two months later and speeches were made by Yeats, Maud Gonne, John O'Leary and others, the young man who had just won a prize for excellence in the Irish language had gone to

When they return there will be mirth
And music in the air,
And fairy rings upon the earth,
And mischief everywhere.
The maids, to keep the elves aloof,
Will bar the doors in vain ;
No keyhole will be fairy-proof
When green leaves come again.

T. H. Bayly.

THE PIPERS

I HEARD the fairy pipers complaining all night
long ;
They quenched the stars and made the wind grow
wistful with their song.
I heard the fairy pipers complaining far away,
And my heart was stirred like a mateless bird in
the dawning o' the day.

The pipes played high upon the hills, the pipes
went wandering down
Where the dawn-wind at the sea-edge ruffles the
sea-wrack brown.
I heard the fairy pipers while the rose grew out
o' the gray,
And my heart beat high as they went by in the
dawning o' the day.

There's dew upon the hillsides no piper's foot
may spill,
They cast no shadow, they who pipe the dreams
of morning still.

Glendalough. In addition to the local myths about giants' graves and saints' beds, Synge knew the story of Red Hugh O'Donnell, the great Gaelic chieftain of the sixteenth century, who had stopped at Castle Kevin on his historic flight from Dublin Castle across the Wicklow mountains. He was shown the hill on which Cromwell's cannon had been mounted for the last assault upon the castle.

Confiscations, rebellions and devastations had left their mark on Wicklow. Almost all the domestic architecture had been destroyed, and the only impressive buildings left standing were those homes of the gentry which had managed to survive the rising of 1798 and were now falling into decay. A more subtle sign of the completeness of the conquest was the total disappearance of the native language and the large number of natives with English names whose origins were lost in the confusion of the centuries. The Wicklow countryman spoke a dialect which blended Gaelic syntax with an archaic English vocabulary and was the natural heritage of a conquest which had suddenly and violently imposed one language upon another. In other parts of Ireland more remote from the conquest this process came later and left more visible marks upon the speech of the people. As Synge tramped over the roads and mountains that first summer, listening not only to the talk of the servant girls but also to the stories told him by the tinkers and tramps he met by the wayside, he was impressed by the colour and vitality of the local dialect without realizing that it would one day provide him with a medium of expression. He did not begin to formulate his theory of language for the stage until he had learned to speak Irish and had lived with bilingual peasants in the west of Ireland.

The modern Castle Kevin is an attractive and rather massive stone house of three floors, the lowest at ground level being accessible only from the rear and containing service rooms and servants' quarters. A courtyard in the rear is surrounded by stables and outhouses, and there is a large high-walled garden covering an acre or so a few yards from the entrance to the stable yard. The garden and terraced grounds are well kept, and the view from the front steps looks over the Wicklow hills stretching for miles into the distance. In Synge's day neither the house nor the grounds had been maintained for years. The hill upon which the house stood was almost entirely surrounded by bogs and streams, passing traffic having been diverted by a new road made early

But if the house be swept,
And from uncleanness kept,
We praise the household maid,
And duly she is paid ;
For we use, before we go,
To drop a tester¹ in her shoe.

Upon a mushroom's head
Our table-cloth we spread ;
A grain of rye or wheat
Is manchet,² which we eat ;
Pearly drops of dew we drink
In acorn-cups filled to the brink.

The brains of nightingales,
With unctuous fat of snails,
Between two cockles stewed,
Is meat that's easily chewed ;
Tails of worms, and marrow of mice,
Do make a dish that's wondrous nice.

The grasshopper, gnat, and fly,
Serve for our minstrelsy ;
Grace said, we dance awhile,
And so the time beguile ;
And, if the moon doth hide her head,
The glowworm lights us home to bed.

On tops of dewy grass
So nimbly do we pass,
The young and tender stalk
Ne'er bends when we do walk ;
Yet in the morning may be seen
Where we the night before have been.

Anonymous.

¹ Sixpence.

² White bread.

musical composition. "Two dangers beset the beginner—vulgarity and morbid effort for originality." "A melody which can only be harmonized awkwardly can never produce perfect music." None of his musical compositions has survived.

He also began to write verse, and sent a poem to Father Russell, the editor of *The Irish Monthly*, entitled "A Mountain Creed":

A mountain flower once I spied,
A lonely height its dwelling,
Where winds around it wailed and sighed
Sad stories sadly telling.

When the flower is asked how it survives its lonely existence, the answer is Wordsworthian:

I live not here to pine and mourn
O'er what is not my making,
But to fulfill my fate inborn
And hold myself unquaking. . . .

Father Russell returned it with the words, "Your pleasing poem has some defects, I think, which allow me to carry out my general policy, which now tends towards a diminution of our supply of verse." His criticism was directed towards the title, two rhymes and the inappropriate use of two adjectives. Synge immediately eliminated the objectionable passages and changed the title to "A Mountain Flower." But Father Russell, whose helpful letters could hardly have been the most effective way of encouraging the "diminution of our supply of verse," as he tactfully put it, returned it again with a short note of congratulation on the improvements.

In the second week of December he took his final examinations and "passed in the second class." When he received his degree on December 15, 1892, he would have had to admit that he had given the college as little as it had given him. Except for his work in Hebrew and Irish, he attended the minimum number of required lectures, ignored all student activities, made no friends and visited his tutor only when required to. He was given what was known as a gentleman's or pass degree, and the college authorities must have thought that a gentleman was all he was capable of becoming.

To them whom they have wronged so ;
When I have done,
I get me gone,
And leave them scolding ; Ho, ho, ho !

When men do traps and engines set
In loopholes, where the vermin creep,
Who from their folds and houses get
Their ducks and geese, and lambs and sheep,
I spy the gin,
And enter in,
And seem a vermin taken so ;
But when they there
Approach me near,
I leap out laughing “ Ho, ho, ho ! ”

By wells and rills, in meadows green,
We nightly dance our hey-day guise ;
And to our fairy king and queen
We chant our moonlight minstrelsies.
When larks gin’¹ sing,
Away we fling ;
And babes newborn steal as we go.
And elf in bed
We leave in stead,
And wend us laughing “ Ho, ho, ho ! ”

¹ Begin.

Anonymous.

Three

FIRST LOVE. GERMANY. PARIS. ITALY

You've made a choice wise men will be glad of in the five ends of Ireland.

In March of 1893 a distant cousin of Mrs. Synge's came from England for a visit to Dublin. Mary Synge was a concert pianist and music teacher whose orthodox religious views enabled her Irish relatives to overlook the fact that she was a professional entertainer. She had thick white hair which seemed to stand on end, and was considered an unconventional but interesting person. She was immediately attracted to Synge, especially when she heard him play and realized that he wanted to make a career of music. Before she had quite realized it she was planning his future for him. When she announced her intentions of giving a piano recital in the Antient Concert Rooms he hired the hall, took charge of the publicity and engaged three Dublin musicians to appear with her. The recital was held on April 17th, and he was delighted when *The Irish Times* published a detailed and complimentary report of her performance.

Whether the idea of flanking herself with local musicians in order to assure a solid attendance and favourable critical reception was his idea or not is not clear, but she was grateful for his help and pointed out that they were now musical colleagues. She decided that he should go to Germany to study, and set about convincing his mother. She would go herself with him to Germany in July to see that he did not fall in with thieves and arrange for him to stay with friends of hers on the river island of Oberwerth, near Coblenz, in a boardinghouse

The clouds roll backward as he flies,
Each flickering star behind him lies,
And he has reached the northern plain,
And backed his firefly steed again,
Ready to follow in its flight
The streaming of the rocket-light.

*From "The Culprit Fay,"
by J. Rodman Drake.*

THE ELFIN ARTIST

IN a glade of an elfin forest,
When Sussex was Eden-new,
I came on an elvish painter,
And watched as his picture grew.
A harebell nodded beside him ;
He dipped his brush in the dew.

And it might be the wild thyme round him
That shone in that dark strange ring ;
But his brushes were bees' antennae ,
His knife was a wasp's blue sting ;
And a gorgeous exquisite palette
Was a butterfly's fan-shaped wing.

And he mingled its powdery colours,
And painted the lights that pass,
On a delicate cobweb canvas
That gleamed like a magic glass,
And bloomed like a banner of Elfland
Between two stalks of grass ;

Till it shone like an angel's feather
With sky-born opal and rose,
And gold from the foot of the rainbow,
And colour that no man knows ;
And I laughed in the sweet May weather
Because of the themes he chose.

For he painted the things that matter,
The tints that we all pass by,
Like the little blue wreaths of incense
That the wild thyme breathes to the sky :
Or the first white bud of the hawthorn,
And the light in a blackbird's eye ;

And the shadows on soft white cloud-peaks
That carolling skylarks throw—
Dark blots on the slumbering splendours
That under the wild wings flow,
Wee shadows like violets trembling
On the unseen breasts of snow ;

With petals too lovely for colour,
That shake to the rapturous wings,
And grow as the bird draws near them,
And die as he mounts and sings—
Ah, only those exquisite brushes
Could paint these marvellous things.

Alfred Noyes.

DAISIES

At evening when I go to bed
I see the stars shine overhead ;
They are the little daisies white
That dot the meadow of the night.

And often, while I'm dreaming so,
Across the sky the Moon will go ;
It is a lady, sweet and fair,
Who comes to gather daisies there.

For when at morning I arise,
There's not a star left in the skies ;
She's picked them all and dropped them down
Into the meadows of the town.

F. D. Sherman.

THE GREEN LADY

A LOVELY Green Lady
Embroiders and stitches
Sweet flowers in the meadows,
On banks, and in ditches.

All day she is sewing,
Embroid'ring all night ;
For she works in the darkness
As well as the light.

She makes no mistakes in
The silks which she uses,
And all her gay colours
She carefully chooses.

She fills nooks and corners
With blossoms so small,
Where none but the fairies
Will see them at all.

She sews them so quickly,
She trims them so neatly,
Though much of her broidery
Is hidden completely.

She scatters her tapestry,
Scented and sweet,
In the loneliest places,
Or 'neath careless feet

For bee, or for birdfolk
For children like me,
But the lovely Green Lady
No mortal may see.

G. D. Cole.

THE MERMAIDS

WE dwell in the Sea-king's ancient hall
Hid deep within the bay,
Where dim groves echo the wind's wild tune,
And whispering waters sway.

Amber and coral and silver and jade
Glisten and gloom through its waves ;
The eager sunbeams fill each arch,
And dance in its crystal caves.

Through forests fairer than mortals know
The Sea-king's children rove ;
We glimpse the grey whales as they pass,
We watch the ships above.

When flaming noonday gilds the sand
Our gardens we prepare,
And deck with pearl and anemones
The seaweed's purple hair.

And when the moon through dewy veils
Her silver radiance pours,
We silently rise above the sea,
And steal to the dusky shores.

Along the ocean's shimmering verge
Merrily trips our throng,
While soft and faintly as a dream
We sing our midnight song.

But when the billows seethe and hiss,
And the seagulls wheel and screech,
Laughing we call where the surges fall
In thunder on the beach ;

With arms upraised we plunge beneath
The tempest's roar and foam,
And glide with mazy movement slow
Back to the Sea-king's home.

Anonymous.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

The poet imagines that a merman came to land and found a wife there, and that she went with him to his home under the sea. In the sea-king's halls she lived happily, except that now and then she felt sad because she was cut off from the friends and customs that she knew and loved. Her sadness increased, and, when she could bear it no longer, she came up to earth, promising to return after one day. As she did not come back, her husband and children rose up through the waves to seek for her. To their bitter sorrow she would not listen to them. At this point the poem opens.

COME, dear children, let us away ;
Down and away below !
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow ;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Come, dear children, let us away !
This way, this way !

Call her once before you go—
Call once yet !
In a voice that she will know :
“ Margaret ! Margaret ! ”
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear ;
Children's voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again !
Call her once and come away ;
This way, this way !
“ Mother dear, we cannot stay !
The wild white horses foam and fret.”
Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down ;
Call no more :
One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore ;
Then come down !
She will not come, though you call all day ;
Come away, come away !

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell ?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep ;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground ;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye ?
When did music come this way ?
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away ?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.

She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green
sea ;

She said : " I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me !
And I lose my poor soul, merman ! here with
thee."

I said : " Go up, dear heart, through the waves ;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-
caves ! "

She smiled, she went up through the surf in the
bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?

" The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan ;
Long prayers," I said, " in the world they say ;
" Come ! " I said ; and we rose through the surf
in the bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled
town ;

Through the narrow paved streets, where all was
still,

To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their
prayers,

But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn
with rains,

And we gazed up the aisles through the small
leaded panes.

She sate by the pillar : we saw her clear :
"Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here !
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone ;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book !
Loud prays the priest ; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more !
Come away, come down, call no more !

Down, down, down !
Down to the depths of the sea !
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings : "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy !
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well ;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun !"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea ;
And her eyes are set in a stare ;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh ;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children ;
Come, children, come down !
The hoarse wind blows coldly ;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl,
Singing : " Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she !
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low ;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanched sands a gloom ;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sandhills,
At the white, sleeping town ;
At the church on the hillside—
And then come back down,

Singing "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she !
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

Matthew Arnold.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

I

HAMELIN town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city ;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side ;
A pleasanter spot you never spied.

But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

II

Rats !

They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking,
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking :
“ ’Tis clear,” cried they, “ our Mayor’s a noddy ;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can’t or won’t determine
What’s best to rid us of our vermin !
You hope, because you’re old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease ?
Rouse up, sirs ! Give your brains a racking,
To find the remedy we’re lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we’ll send you packing ! ”
At this the Mayor and corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV

An hour they sat in council ;
At length the Mayor broke silence :
“ For a guilder I’d my ermine gown sell !
I wish I were a mile hence !
It’s easy to bid one rack one’s brain—
I’m sure my poor head aches again,
I’ve scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh, for a trap, a trap, a trap ! ”
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap ?
“ Bless us ! ” cried the Mayor ; “ what’s that ? ”
(With the Corporation as he sat
Looking little, though wondrous fat ;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous

For a plate of turtle green and glutinous),
“ Only a scraping of shoes on the mat ?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat ! ”

V

“ Come in ! ” the Mayor cried, looking bigger
And in did come the strangest figure !
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red ;
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in ;
There was no guessing his kith and kin :
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one : “ It’s as my great-grandsire
Starting up at the Trump of Doom’s tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tomb-
stone ! ”

VI

He advanced to the council-table :
And “ Please your honours,” he said, “ I’m able.
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep, or swim, or fly, or run,
After me so as you never saw !
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and toad and newt and viper :
And people call me the Pied Piper.”

(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match his coat of the self-same check :
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe :
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
" Yet," said he, " poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,

Last June, from his huge swarm of gnats :
I eased in Asia the Nizam

Of a monstrous brood of vampire bats :
And as for what your brain bewilders,

If I can rid your town of rats,
Will you give me a thousand guilders ? "
" One ? Fifty thousand ! " was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII

Into the street the Piper stept,

Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept

In his quiet pipe the while :

Then, like a musical adept,

To blow his pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,

Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled :

And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered ;

And the muttering grew to a grumbling,

And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling ;

And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.

Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,

Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens.

Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives,
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the River Weser,
Wherein all plunged and perished !

Save one, who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across, and lived to carry

(As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary :
Which was : “ At the first shrill note of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press’s gripe :
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks :
And it seemed as if a voice

(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, ‘ O rats, rejoice !

The world is grown to one vast drysaltery !
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon ! ’
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious, scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, ‘ Come, bore me ! ’
—I found the Weser rolling o’er me.”

VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
“Go,” cried the Mayor, “and get long poles;
Poke out the nests, and block up the holes!

Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!”—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a “First, if you please, my thousand
guilders!”

IX

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For Council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar’s biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow,
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
“Beside,” quoth the Mayor, with a knowing
wink,

“Our business was done at the river’s brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what’s dead can’t come to life, I think.
So, friend, we’re not the folk to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But, as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Besides, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!”

X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait. Beside,
I've promised to visit by dinner-time
Bagdad, and accept the prime
Of the head-cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor:
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe to another fashion."

XI

"How!" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I'd brook
Being worse treated than a cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald,
With idle pipe and vesture piebald!
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

XII

Once more he stept into the street,
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air),
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling;

Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering;
And, like fowls in a farm-yard where barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks, and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes, and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by ;
And could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But now the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters !
However, he turned from south to west,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed ;
Great was the joy in every breast.
" He never can cross that mighty top !
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop ! "
When, lo ! as they reached the mountain-side

A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed ;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed ;

And when all were in, to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.

Did I say all ? No ! one was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way ;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say :

“ It’s dull in our town since my playmates left !
I can’t forget that I’m bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town, and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new ;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow-deer ;
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles’ wings :
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped, and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more ! ”

XIV

Alas ! alas for Hamelin !

There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says that heaven's gate
Opes to the rich at as easy a rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in !

The Mayor sent east, west, north and south,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
Wherever it was man's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.

But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear :

" And so long after what happened here
On the Twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six : "

And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it the Pied Piper's Street.
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn ;
But opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away,

And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people who ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison,
Into which they were trepanned
Long ago, in a mighty band,
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how, or why, they don't understand.

Robert Browning.

THE MOON IS UP

THE moon is up : the stars are bright :
The wind is fresh and free !
We're out to seek for gold to-night
Across the silver sea !
The world was growing grey and old :
Break out the sails again !
We're out to seek a realm of gold
Beyond the Spanish Main.

Beyond the light of far Cathay,
Beyond all mortal dreams,
Beyond the reach of night and day
Our Eldorado gleams,
Revealing, as the skies unfold,
A star without a stain—
The glory of the gates of gold
Beyond the Spanish Main.

Alfred Noyes.

SPRING

The sound of this poem is like the sweet singing of the birds in April. The first verse tells of flowers, the second of the half-grown lambs, the third of the scented fields. But they all end in "Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo."

SPRING, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant thing ;

Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,

Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing—
"Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo !"

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay—
"Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo !"

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet—
"Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo !"

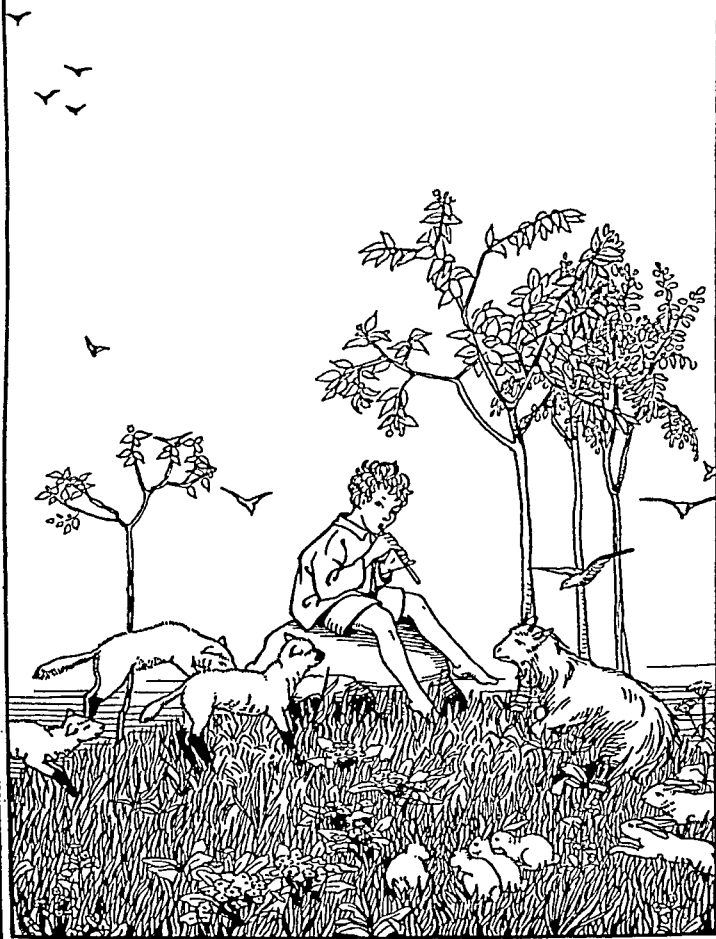
Spring, the sweet Spring !

Thomas Nashe.

SPRING GOETH ALL IN WHITE

The previous piece celebrates the sounds of spring : this sets her sights before our eyes.

SPRING goeth all in white,
Crowned with milk-white may :
In fleecy flocks of light
O'er heaven the white clouds stray :



White butterflies in the air ;
White daisies prank the ground :
The cherry and hoary pear
Scatter their snow around.

Robert Bridges.

THE CELANDINE

PANSIES, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises ;
Long as there's a sun that sets
Primroses will have their glory ;
Long as there are violets
They will have a place in story :
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little celandine.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about its nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless prodigal ;
Telling tales about the sun
When we've little warmth, or none.

Prophet of delight and mirth
Scorned and slighted upon earth !
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,

Singing at my heart's command,
In the lanes my thoughts pursuing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love !

William Wordsworth.

APRIL RAIN

The subject is "April showers bring May flowers."

It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining daffodils ;
In every dimpled drop I see
Wild flowers on the hills.
The clouds of grey engulf the day,
And overwhelm the town—
It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining roses down.

It isn't raining rain to me,
But fields of clover bloom,
Where any buccaneering bee
May find a bed and room.
A health unto the happy,
A fig for him who frets—
It isn't raining rain to me,
It's raining violets.

Robert Loveman.

THE PROCESSION OF THE FLOWERS

What a clever bright picture the poet shows us of each of the flowers—the early primrose, the fragile anemone, the hosts of daisies, the golden cowslip dancing in the breeze!

FIRST came the primrose,
On the bank high,
Like a maiden looking forth
From the window of a tower
When the battle rolls below ;
So looked she,
And saw the storms go by.

Then came the windflower
In the valley left behind,
As a wounded maiden, pale
With purple streaks of woe,
When the battle has rolled by,
Wanders to and fro ;
So tottered she,
Dishevelled in the wind.

Then came the daisies,
On the first of May,
Like a bannered show's advance,
While the crowd runs by the way ;
With ten thousand flowers about them
They came trooping through the fields.

As a happy people come,
So came they,
As a happy people come
When the war has rolled away,
With dance and tabor, pipe and drum,
And all make holiday.

Then came the cowslip ;
Like a dancer in the fair,
She spread her little mat of green,
And on it dancëd she,
With a fillet bound about her brow,
A fillet round her happy brow,
A golden fillet round her brow,
And rubies in her hair.

Song from " Balder," by Sydney Dobell.

DAFFODILS

It is the remembrance of his walk that the poet tells of. He must have written this long after he actually saw the daffodils by the lake.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud,
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils ;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay ;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee :

A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company ;
I gazed, and gazed, but little thought
What wealth to me the show had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth.

THE THRUSH'S NEST

WITHIN a thick and spreading hawthorn bush
That overhung a molehill large and round,
I heard from morn to morn a merry thrush
Sing hymns to sunrise, and I drank the sound
With joy ; and often, an intruding guest,
I watched her secret toil from day to day—
How true she warped the moss, to form a nest,
And modelled it within with wood and clay ;
And by-and-by, like heath-bells gilt with dew,
There lay her shining eggs, as bright as flowers,
Inkspotted-over shells of greeny blue ;
And there I witnessed in the sunny hours
A brood of Nature's minstrels chirp and fly,
Glad as the sunshine and the laughing sky.

John Clare.

THE RAIN

In the second verse, there is a delightful picture, painted in a few words, of raindrops glistening in the sun.

I HEAR leaves drinking Rain :
I hear rich leaves on top
Giving the poor beneath
Drop after drop ;
'Tis a sweet noise to hear
The green leaves drinking near.

And when the sun comes out,
After this rain shall stop,
A wondrous Light will fill
Each dark, round drop :
I hope the sun shines bright :
'Twill be a lovely sight.

W. H. Davies.

THE BROOK

Many poems make something which has no life tell its own story as if it was alive. This is one of them. The brook seems to enjoy its life, for the verses are full of merry chatter and murmuring music.

I COME from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorpes, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling.

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel,
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel.

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers ;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows ;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses ;
I linger by my shingly bars ;
I loiter round my cresses.

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Alfred Tennyson.

THE WINDMILL

The second and fifth stanzas are specially noteworthy. Anyone who has stood near a windmill when the sails are revolving will know the reason.

THE green corn waving in the dale,
The ripe grass waving on the hill ;
I lean across the paddock pale
And gaze upon the giddy mill.

Its hurtling sails a mighty sweep
Cut thro' the air : with rushing sound
Each strikes in fury down the steep,
Rattles, and whirls in chase around.

Beside his sacks the miller stands
On high within the open door :
A book and pencil in his hands,
His grist and meal he reckoneth o'er.

His tireless merry slave the wind
Is busy with his work to-day :
From whencesoe'er, he comes to grind ;
He hath a will and knows the way.

He gives the creaking sails a spin,
The circling millstones faster flee,
The shuddering timbers groan within,
And down the shoot the meal runs free.

The miller giveth him no thanks,
And doth not much his work o'erlook :
He stands beside the sacks, and ranks
The figures in his dusty book.

Robert Bridges.

THE SWALLOW

THE gorse is yellow on the heath,
The banks with speedwell flowers are gay,
The oaks are budding ; and beneath
The hawthorn soon will bear the wreath,
The silver wreath of May.

The welcome guest of settled Spring,
The swallow, too, is come at last ;
Just at sunset, when thrushes sing,
I saw her dash with rapid wing,
And hailed her as she passed.

Come, summer visitant, attach
To my red roof your nest of clay,
And let my ear your music catch
Low twittering underneath the thatch
At the grey dawn of day.

Charlotte Smith.

OLD CROW

THE bird in the corn
Is a marvellous crow,
He was laid and was born
In the season of snow ;
And he chants his old catches
Like a ghost under hatches.

He comes from the shades
Of his wood very early,
And works in the blades
Of the wheat and the barley ;
And he's happy, although
He's a grumbleton crow.

The larks have devices
For sunny delight,
And the sheep in their fleeces
Are woolly and white ;
But these things are the scorn
Of the bird in the corn.

And morning goes by,
And still he is there,
Till a rose in the sky
Calls him back to his lair
In the boughs where the gloom
Is a part of his plume.

But the boy in the lane
 With his gun, by and by,
 To the heart of the grain
 Will narrowly spy,
 And the twilight will come
 And no crow will fly home.

John Drinkwater.

NICHOLAS NYE

An old donkey has a very forlorn appearance—he is so quiet and melancholy. Everybody notices that, and most people feel a sympathetic pity for him.

THISTLE and darnel and dock grew there,
 And a bush, in the corner, of may,
 On the orchard wall I used to sprawl
 In the blazing heat of the day ;
 Half asleep and half awake,
 While the birds went twittering by,
 And nobody there my lone to share
 But Nicholas Nye.

Nicholas Nye was lean and grey,
 Lamé of a leg and old,
 More than a score of donkey's years
 He had seen since he was foaled ;
 He munched the thistles, purple and spiked,
 Would sometimes droop and sigh,
 And turn to his head, as if he said,
 " Poor Nicholas Nye ! "

Alone with his shadow he'd drowse in the meadow,
 Lazily swinging his tail,
 At break of day he used to bray—
 Not much too hearty and hale ;

But a wonderful gumption was under his skin,
And a clear calm light in his eye,
And, once in a while, he'd smile a smile—
Would Nicholas Nye.

Seem to be smiling at me, he would,
From his bush, in the corner, of may,
Bony and ownerless, widowed and worn,
Knobble-kneed, lonely and grey ;
And over the grass would seem to pass,
'Neath the deep dark blue of the sky,
Something much better than words between me
And Nicholas Nye.

But dusk would come in the apple boughs,
The green of the glow-worm shine,
The birds in nest would crouch to rest,
And home I'd trudge to mine ;
And there in the moonlight, dark with dew,
Asking not wherefore nor why,
Would brood like a ghost, and as still as a post,
Old Nicholas Nye.

Walter de la Mare.

THE CUCKOO

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the grove !
Thou messenger of Spring !
Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome ring.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear :
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year ?

Delightful visitant ! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
From birds among the bowers.

The schoolboy, wandering through the wood
To pull the primrose gay,
Starts, the new voice of Spring to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou fliest thy vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another Spring to hail.

Sweet bird ! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear ;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year.

O could I fly, I'd fly with thee !
We'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the Spring.

John Logan.

THE TIGER

Besides the swallow and the donkey, and the other harmless creatures of the world, there are fierce beasts of prey, all made by the same Power. The poet is puzzled by the mystery of their creation, and is awed by the contemplation of their strength and ferocity.

TIGER ! tiger ! burning bright,
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry ?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes ?
On what wings dare he aspire—
What the hand dare seize the fire ?

And what shoulder, and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart ?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand ? and what dread feet ?

What the hammer ? what the chain ?
In what furnace was thy brain ?
What the anvil ? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp ?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see ?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee ?

Tiger ! tiger ! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry ?

W. Blake.

FOUR PAWS

The last poem was full of wonder: this breathes playful tenderness. But to the mouse or thrush caught in her claws the cat is as dreadful as the tiger is to us.

Four Paws, the kitten from the farm,
Is come to live with Betsy Jane,
Leaving the stack-yard for the warm
Flower-compassed cottage in the lane,
To wash his idle face and play
Among chintz cushions all the day.

Under the shadow of her hair
He lies, who loves him nor desists
To praise his whiskers and compare
The Tabby bracelets on his wrists ;—
Omelet at lunch and milk at tea
Suit Betsy Jane and so fares he.

Happy beneath her golden hand
He purrs contentedly, nor hears
His Mother mourning through the land,
The old gray cat with tattered ears
And humble tail and heavy paw
Who brought him up among the straw.

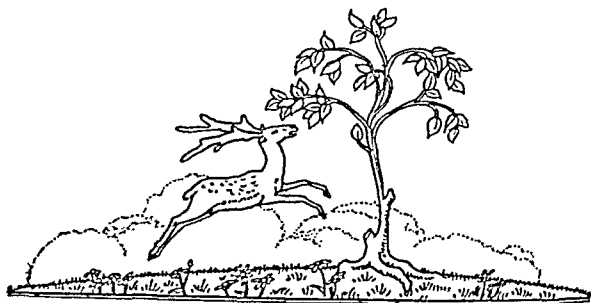
Never by day she ventures nigh ;
But, when the dusk grows dim and deep
And moths flit out of the strange sky
And Betsy has been long asleep,
Out of the dark she comes, and brings
Her dark maternal offerings—

Some field-mouse or a throstle caught
Near netted fruit or in the corn,
Or rat, for this her darling sought
In the old barn where he was born ;
And all lest on his dainty bed
Four Paws were faint or underfed.

Only between the twilight hours
Under the window-panes she walks
Shrewdly among the scented flowers
Nor snaps the soft nasturtium stalks,
Uttering still her plaintive cries,
And Four Paws, from the house, replies,

Leaps from his cushion to the floor,
Down the brick passage scantily lit,
Waits wailing at the outer door
Till one arise and open it ;
Then from the swinging lantern's light
Runs to his mother in the night.

Helen Parry Eden.



VI

THE FIDDLER OF DOONEY

There are many kinds of fun. John Gilpin's ride has made thousands of people smile, because his misfortunes are so ridiculous. Other poems like "There was an old man" are comical because they are sheer playful nonsense.

WHEN I play on my fiddle in Dooney
Folk dance like a wave of the sea ;
My cousin is priest in Kilvarnet,
My brother in Moharabuiee.

I passed my brother and cousin :
They read in their books of prayer :
I read in my book of songs
I bought at the Sligo fair.

When we come, at the end of time,
To Peter sitting in state,
He will smile on the three old spirits,
But call me first through the gate ;

For the good are always the merry,
Save by an evil chance,
And the merry love the fiddle,
And the merry love to dance ;



And when the folk there spy me,
They will all come up to me,
With "Here is the fiddler of Dooney!"
And dance like a wave of the sea.

W. B. Yeats.

THERE WAS AN OLD MAN

THERE was once an old man, and, though 'tis
not common,
Yet, if he said true, he was born of a woman;
And, though 'tis incredible, yet I've been told,
He was once a mere infant, but age made him
old.

Whene'er he was hungry, he longed for some
meat;
And, if he could get it, 'twas said he would eat;
When thirsty, he'd drink, if you gave him a pot;
And his liquor most commonly ran down his
throat.

He seldom, if ever, could see without light;
And yet I've been told he could hear in the
night;
He has oft been awake in the daytime, 'tis said
And has fallen asleep as he lay in his bed.

'Tis reported his tongue always moved when he
talked ;
He stirred both his arms and his legs when he
walked ;
His gait was so odd—had you seen him, you'd
burst ;
For one leg or the other would always be first.

His face was the oddest that ever was seen ;
For, if 'twere not washed, it was seldom quite
clean ;
He showed his teeth most when he happened to
grin ;
And his mouth stood across 'twixt his nose and
his chin.

At last he fell sick, as old chronicles tell,
And then, as folks said, he was not very well ;
But, what is more strange, in so weak a condition,
As he could not give fees, he could get no phy-
sician.

What a pity he died ! Yet 'tis said that his death
Was occasioned, at last, by the want of his breath.
But peace to his bones, which in ashes now
moulder !
Had he lived a day longer, he'd been a day older.

Anonymous.

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN
GILPIN

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke¹ was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's wife said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear;
Therefore it shall be done.

"I am a linen draper bold,
As all the world doth know;
And my good friend the calender²
Will lend his horse to go."

¹ Also.

² A man whose business it was to press cloth.

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said ;
And, for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife ;
O'erjoyed was he to find,
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
Where they did all get in ;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To drive through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane ;
And up he got in haste to ride,
But soon came down again ;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came ; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, he knew full well,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty, screaming, came downstairs,
“ The wine is left behind ! ”

“ Good lack ! ” quoth he—“ yet give it me
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword,
When I do exercise.”

Now Mrs. Gilpin (careful soul !)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then, over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

So "Fair and softly!" John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing had got upon his back
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or naught,
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly
Like streamer long and gay,
Till loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung:
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The Diverting History of John Gilpin 83

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all,
And every soul cried out "Well done!"
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around;
"He carries weight! he rides a race!
'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down,
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied

Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

“ Stop, stop, John Gilpin ! Here’s the house,”
They all aloud did cry ;
“ The dinner waits, and we are tired.”
Said Gilpin “ So am I.”

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there ;
For why ?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew
Shot by an archer strong ;
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender’s
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him :

“ What news ? what news ? Your tidings tell :
Tell me you must and shall ;
Say why bareheaded you have come,
Or why you come at all.”

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke ;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke :

“ I came because your horse would come ;
And if I well forbode,
My hat and wig will soon be here ;
‘ They are upon the road.’ ”

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
But to the house went in ;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig,
A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely of its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus showed his ready wit :—
“ My head is twice as big as yours ;
They therefore needs must fit.

“ But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face ;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case.”

Said John, “ It is my wedding day,¹
And all the world would stare
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware.”

¹ That is, the anniversary of his wedding day

So, turning to his horse, he said,
 " I am in haste to dine ;
'Twas for your pleasure I came here ;
 You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech and bootless boast !
 For which he paid full dear ;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
 Did sing most loud and clear.

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
 Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
 As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
 Went Gilpin's hat and wig :
He lost them sooner than at first :
 For why ?—they were too big.

Now Mrs. Gilpin, when she saw
 Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
 She pulled out half-a-crown.

And thus unto the youth she said
 That drove them to the Bell,
" This shall be yours, when you bring back
 My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
 John coming back amain ;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop
 By catching at his rein.

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But, not performing what he meant
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry :—

“ Stop thief ! stop thief !—a highwayman ! ”
Not one of them was mute ;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space,
The toll-men thinking as before
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town ;
Nor stopped till where he did get up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing “ Long live the King !
And Gilpin, long live he ! ”
And when he next doth ride abroad
May I be there to see !

William Cowper.

THE FROG

BE kind and tender to the Frog,
And do not call him names,
As "Slimy-Skin" or "Pollywog,"
Or likewise "Uncle James,"
Or "Gape-a-grin," or "Toad-gone-wrong,"
Or "Billy Bandy-knees";
The frog is justly sensitive
To epithets like these.

No animal will more repay
A treatment kind and fair,
At least so lonely people say
Who keep a frog (and, by the way,
They are extremely rare).

Hilaire Belloc.



VII

THERE IS NO LAND LIKE ENGLAND

THERE is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no hearts like English hearts,
Such hearts of oak as they be.

There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no men like Englishmen,
So tall and bold as they be.

And these will strike for England,
And man and maid be free
To foil and spoil the tyrant
Beneath the greenwood tree.

There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no wives like English wives,
So fair and chaste as they be.

There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be ;
There are no maids like English maids,
So beautiful as they be.



And these shall wed with freemen,
And all their sons be free,
To sing the songs of England
Beneath the greenwood tree.

Song from 'The Foresters,' by Lord Tennyson.

THE FOUNTAIN

INTO the sunshine, full of the light,
Leaping and flashing from morn till night ;
Into the moonlight, whiter than snow,
Waving so flower-like when the winds blow.
Into the starlight, rushing in spray,
Happy at midnight, happy by day ;
Ever in motion, blithesome and cheery,
Still climbing heavenward, never awearry.
Ceaseless aspiring, ceaseless content,
Darkness or sunshine thy element ;
Full of a nature nothing can tame,
Changed every moment, ever the same :—
Glorious fountain ! let my heart be
Fresh, changeful, constant, upward, like thee !

James Russell Lowell.

THE VIOLET

This little poem is as fragrant as the modest flower which it praises.

Down in a green and shady bed
A modest violet grew ;
Its stalk was bent, it hung its head,
As if to hide from view.

And yet it was a lovely flower,
 Its colour bright and fair ;
 It might have graced a rosy bower,
 Instead of hiding there.

Yet thus it was content to bloom
 In modest tints arrayed ;
 And there diffused a sweet perfume
 Within the silent shade.

Jane Taylor.

ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAU- TEOUS

ALL things bright and beauteous,
 All creatures great and small,
 All things wise and wondrous
 The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
 Each little bird that sings,
 He made their glowing colours,
 He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain,
 The river running by,
 The sunset and the morning,
 That brightens up ¹ the sky,

The cold wind in the winter,
 The pleasant summer sun,
 The ripe fruits in the garden,
 He made them every one.

¹ Along.

The tall trees in the greenwood,
The meadows where we play,
The rushes by the water
We gather every day—

He gave us eyes to see them
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.

C. F. Alexander.

GREAT, WIDE, BEAUTIFUL, WONDERFUL WORLD

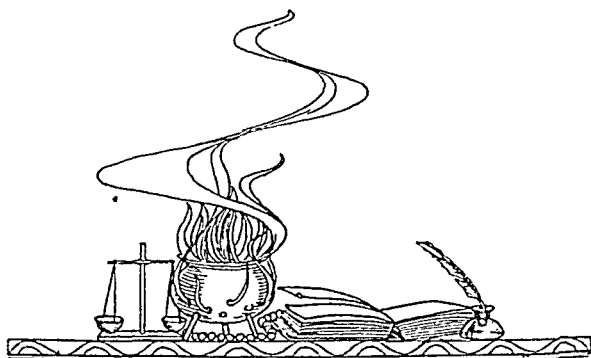
GREAT, wide, beautiful, wonderful World,
With the wonderful water round you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast—
World, you are beautifully drest.

The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree ;
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the tops of the hills.

You friendly Earth, how far do you go,
With the wheatfields that nod, and the rivers
that flow,
With cities, and gardens, and cliffs, and isles,
And people upon you for thousands of miles ?

Ah, you are so great, and I am so small,
I tremble to think of you, World, at all ;
And yet, when I said my prayers to-day,
A whisper inside me seemed to say,
“ You are more than the Earth, though you are
such a dot :
For you can love and think, and the Earth cannot.”

W. B. Rands.



EXERCISES

(All these questions and exercises, except the last, are intended to be answered orally.)

1. Find as many words as you can which mean the same as : stream, bright, glow, garments, prisoner, lofty, noise, fear, woods, vanish, house, flower, dawn, dog, wind, beautiful, broken, girl, colour, old, scent, work, vanish, big, merry, strong, solemn.
2. Find words which rhyme with : sand, mill, head, sky, star, day, green, stream, leap, grass, wave, fall, wild, face, down, dear, wing, blue, gold, white, corn.
3. Name a poem (1) which is a song about daybreak ; (2) which praises a wandering life ; (3) which relates a story ; (4) which is about the sea ; (5) which describes a flower ; (6) which contains a word-picture ; (7) which is amusing ; (8) which causes a feeling of wonder.
4. Complete the following verses by putting suitable words where a blank occurs.
 - (1) The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free ;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent —.
 - (2) As we rush, as we rush in the train,
The trees and houses go wheeling back ;
But the starry heavens above the plain
Come flying on our —.

(3) Over the downs in sunlight clear
 Forth we went in the spring — ;
 Plunder of April's gold we sought,
 Little of April's anger thought.

(4) In Deptford streets the houses small
 Huddle forlorn together.
 Whether the wind blow or be still,
 'Tis soiled and sorry —.

5 Find words which describe :

[*Model.*—Wind : *whistling* wind, *bitter* wind, etc.]

- (1) Morning, cloud, lark, fields.
- (2) City, sea, world.
- (3) Ship, waves, lightning.
- (4) Daisy, harebell, primrose, ferns, poppies.
- (5) Dove, spider, snake, tiger.
- (6) Trees, leaves, forest.
- (7) Spring, summer, autumn, winter.
- (8) Battle, noise, sword, wound.

6. Rewrite the following passages as verse, by dividing them at the proper places :

[*Model.*—The moon is up : the stars are bright :
 the wind is fresh and free ! we're off to seek
 for gold to-night across the silver sea.

Answer.—The moon is up : the stars are bright :
 The wind is fresh and free !
 We're off to seek for gold to-night
 Across the silver sea.]

(1) Good King Wenceslas looked out on the feast
 of Stephen, when the snow lay round about,
 deep and crisp and even.

(2) The locks of five princesses I won beyond
 the sea ; I clipt their golden tresses to
 fringe a cloak for thee.

- (3) Across the fleeting eastern cloud the splendid rainbow sprang, and larks, invisible and loud, within its zenith sang.
- (4) There lived a sage in days of yore, and he a handsome pigtail wore; but wondered much and sorrowed more because it hung behind him.
7. In each of these poems choose the line or verse which seems to you the most beautiful, and state why you consider it to be so:
I will make you Brooches; How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix; A Boy's Song; The Green Lady; The Forsaken Merman; Great, Wide, Beautiful, Wonderful World; The Thrush's Nest.
8. Find rhymes for: morrow, mountain, thistle, singing, flower, brother, falling, ready, places, boulder.
9. Describe one of the pictures in this book.
10. Rearrange the words of the following sentences in the order in which they would usually be spoken.
[*Model.*—Into the street the Piper stept.
Answer.—The Piper stept into the street.]
 - (1) On the mountain dawns the day.
 - (2) Why should we yet our sail unfurl?
 - (3) With the pedlar-man I should like to roam.
 - (4) Fair stood the wind for France.
 - (5) And alone dwell for ever
The Kings of the Sea.
 - (6) At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking.
 - (7) In a palace of pearl and seaweed,
Set round with shining shells,
Under the deeps of the ocean
The little sea princess dwells

- (8) Within a thick and spreading hawthorn bush
That overhung a molehill large and round
I heard from morn to morn a merry thrush
Sing hymns to sunrise.

11. Complete the following sentences in a suitable manner :

[*Model.*—Her eyes shone like —.

Answer.—Her eyes shone like stars.]

(1) Robin Hood was as brave as —.

(2) The old man was as strong as —.

(3) His hair was as white as —.

(4) The billows were as huge as —.

(5) The morning air was as clear as —.

(6) In the sunlight the stream glittered like —.

12. Of the words suggested to fill in the blank spaces in these sentences choose those which you consider the best :

(1) The buttercup is a [golden, yellow, nice, small] flower.

(2) The woods were full of [loud, noisy, echoing, ringing] echoes.

(3) Here where the heather blooms
'Neath the [blue, stormy, spreading] skies,
Here let us rest awhile.

(4) [Hoarsely, gently, merrily] shouted all the
sailors,
Gaily as they left the town.

13. Rearrange the words of the following pieces so as to form two lines of verse which rhyme :

[*Model.*—She was clad in golden garments, and
she had a belt round her waist.

Answer.—In golden garments she was clad,
And round her waist a belt she had.]

(1) The horse sank low at the first plunge, and
the water broke o'er the saddle bow.

(2) Here, by night and day, she weaves a magic web with gay colours.

(3) The sun is low upon the lake, the hills have evening's deepest glow.

(4) Now the hostile armies stand front to front, eager to fight, and only wait command.

14. Describe :

(1) The Sun at Daybreak, an April Shower, July.

(2) A Gipsy, a Scarecrow, the Pied Piper, a Fairy.

(3) A Thrush, a Waterlily, a Ladybird, a Camel, a Donkey.

(4) A Sailing Boat, a Shell, a Sea-anemone.

(5) A Quiet Country Lane, a Busy Street.

15. In the following improve the marked lines by altering the order of the words :

[*Model.*—And then a mournful shudder

Crept through all the people, X

And some that came to scoff at him

Now turned aside and wept.

Answer.—Through all the people crept.]

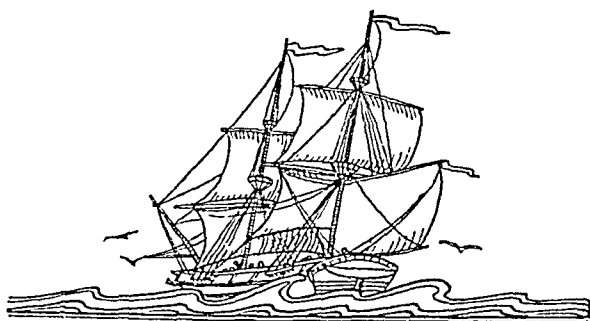
(1) O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west ;
His steed was the best through all the wide
Border. X

(2) Old Tubal Cain was a man of might
In the days when Earth was young ;
By the fierce red light of his bright furnace X
The strokes of his hammer rung.

(3) A beam creeps o'er the broad hill, X
Like hope that gilds a good man's brow :
And now ascends the nostril-steam
Of stalwart horses come to plough.

(4) Both child and nurse are fast asleep,
And every flower is closed, X
And winking tapers faintly peep
High from my lady's bower.

16. Subjects for composition: (1) Sparrows; (2) A Street Artist; (3) My Earliest Memory; (4) Flying a Kite; (5) On going out in a Boat; (6) A Scarecrow; (7) The Pied Piper's Story; (8) The Wind tells his Story; (9) Cinderella tells her Story; (10) A Conversation between Roland and John Gilpin's Horse; (11) A Spider's Web; (12) A Wasp; (13) A Snowstorm; (14) A Field full of Poppies; (15) A Fox Terrier's Day; (16) A Hayfield; (17) The Daisy; (18) Try, Try Again; (19) The Dog in the Manger; (20) On Going on an Errand (humorous).



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